



State of Wisconsin
Department of Health and Family Services

Jim Doyle, Governor
Helene Nelson, Secretary

Stephanie Marquis, Communications Director
(608) 266-1683
Bruce Kamradt, Milwaukee County Behavioral Health Division Program Administrator
(414) 257-7639

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**MILWAUKEE CHILD WELFARE
EXPANDS MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR FOSTER FAMILIES**

(October 19, 2005) – The Department of Health and Family Services announces it will be giving a \$700,000 grant over two years to Milwaukee County Department of Health and Human Services Behavioral Health Division for an expansion of crisis intervention services for foster families provided by their Mobile Urgent Treatment Team.

“It’s common for foster youth to have mental health and emotional issues because of the situations they have been exposed to in their lives,” said Burnie Bridge, Division of Children and Family Services Administrator. “This grant will enhance the services that we currently offer to foster families to help support the children placed in their care, which will in turn reduce the need to move the foster child to another home because of mental health and behavioral issues.”

The grant will support a dedicated mobile crisis team to provide immediate mental health services 24 hours-a-day for foster youth and their foster families. The team will consist of trained staff that will be available immediately to assess and treat the foster child and provide support to the foster family.

In addition, the team will develop a 21 day response plan, which will include follow-up visits to the foster home to evaluate how the child and foster family are doing and identify other mental health service needs. A phone helpline will also be available to the foster families so they can talk to a mental health professional from the Mobile Urgent Treatment Team regarding the emotional, behavioral and mental health needs of the foster child.

The team will also prepare a longer term crisis plan for children who are found to be at high risk for a recurring mental health, emotional or behavioral crisis. The team will begin providing services to foster families by December 2005.

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